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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/923,035

Applicant(s)

NAFEH ET AL.

Examiner

Elda Milef

Art Unit

3692

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 10 April 2009.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-126 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 29-95, 97-103, 106-112, 116-123, 125 and 126 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-28, 96, 104, 105, 113-115 and 124 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 1/6/2009
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Status of the Claims

1. This office action is in response to the amendments submitted by the applicants on 4/10/2009.

- Claims 29-95, 97-103, 106-112, 116-123, 125-126 are cancelled.
- Claims 1-28, 96, 104, 105, 113-115, 124 are pending in the application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-28, 104, 105, 113-115, 124 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shepherd (US Patent No. 5,970,479) in view of Slyke et al (hereinafter Slyke US 2002/0042770 A1) in further view of Muralidhar (U.S. Patent No. 7,206,755).

Re Claim 1: Shepherd disclose:

establishing a computer-network based futures trading system electronically accessible by traders, said trading system including a plurality of trading accounts, each trader on the trading system being associated with at least one of the trading accounts;

settling contracts against trading accounts of traders-see col. 7, lines 32-49; figure 2; col. 11 lines 50-52; Figures 6, 41-48.

Shepherd does not specifically disclose establishing, on said trading system, a plurality of separate contracts within contract bundles, wherein each contract bundle comprises at least two separate contracts, and selling, over said trading system, at least one of the plurality of separate contracts with the contract bundle. Slyke however, discloses liquid insurance (i.e. risk management) contracts, including the use of bundling multiple existing contracts (paragraph 0268-0269). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to include the teachings of Slyke to the disclosure of Shepherd in order to reduce the risk associated with dealing with future events. For example, Slyke notes a specific example of bundling an LIC with a currency exchange contract when dealing with investments in foreign currencies. This bundle is necessary to both hedge against the risk of future event of the contract itself, as well as any fluctuations in currency that result over the life of the contract.

Shepherd and Slyke do not explicitly disclose each contract bundle paying off an aggregate fixed sum at maturity, the aggregate fixed sum known when the contract bundles are established. Muralidhar disclose derivatives (contract bundles) and paying off an aggregate fixed sum at maturity, the fixed sum known when contract bundles are established (providing a pre-specified payoff of a fixed sum at maturity, col. 2 line 64 to col. 3 line 14; col. 4 lines 31-34; col.6 lines 45-53). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to include in the method and apparatus of trading risk management contracts of Shepherd and the method and system of trading of liquid

insurance contracts of Slyke the ability to trading of contracts and derivatives of those contracts and to provide a pre-specified payoff as taught by Muralidhar since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable. Furthermore, it is notoriously old and well known in the art of finance that the price of a futures contract is determined when the contract is established.

Although Shepherd discloses accepting futures contracts for resale in col. 5 lines 25-40, Shepherd does not specifically disclose accepting for resale, the at least one of the plurality of separate contracts within the contract bundles. Slyke however, teaches LICs with detachable options-see pars. 166-171 and settling the at least one of the plurality of separate contracts against the trading account of the trader of said separate contract-see pars. 200-206, 166-171, 235. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Shepherd to specifically include liquid insurance contracts (LICs) with detachable options/securities as taught by Slyke in order to allow underwriters who would prefer to obtain more cash early on to detach and sell the detachable premium security.

Shepherd does not explicitly disclose assessing a transaction fee for at least one of the said steps of selling, accepting for resale, or settling of the at least one of the plurality of separate contracts. Slyke however disclose transaction fees in para 207, and 304. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Shepherd to specifically include transaction fees as

taught by Slyke in order to generate revenue and pay expenses incurred by the exchange. Furthermore, Muralidhar discloses transaction fees in col. 4 line 19.

Re Claims 2-6: Shepherd does not explicitly disclose establishing a computer-network based futures trading system electronically accessible by prospective traders includes establishing a computer-network based futures trading systems electronically accessible by prospective traders via at least an internet interface; allowing only predetermined computer-network users to view information about said trading system. Slyke however, teaches a method for bidding using the Internet -see para. 133 and a qualifying a buyer /underwriter process-see pars. 126-128. It would have been obvious to anyone skilled in the ordinary art at the time of invention to modify Shepherd to specifically include qualifying users of the trading system in order to protect the customers and the exchange from fraud and unfair business practices.

Re claim 7: Shepherd discloses contracts paying a fixed sum or a zero sum depending on an outcome of a future event and derivatives.-see col. 4 lines 17-23; col. 5 lines 12-24; col. 9 lines 48-50. Shepherd does not explicitly disclose separate contracts. Slyke however, teaches separate contracts included in a bundle. -see pars. 268-273. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to include the teachings of Slyke to the disclosure of Shepherd in order to reduce the risk associated with dealing with future events.

Furthermore, it is old and well known in the art of Finance that derivatives are bundles of futures contracts. -see Conclusion below and prior art cited under Chung.

Re Claim 8, 9: Shepherd/Slyke/Muralidhar disclose the claimed method supra, Shepherd further discloses the step of receiving data from a prospective trader identifying a predetermined phenomenon for which a futures contract is desired, the phenomenon having at least two future possible outcomes at a time of maturity (Column 4, lines 17- 23). Shepherd discloses wherein the step of selling futures contract bundles, includes selling a futures contract bundle comprising at least two futures contracts, each of said at least two futures contracts corresponding to one of said at least two future possible outcomes of said future event. (Column 4, lines 25- 29). Shepherd does not specifically disclose separate contracts. Slyke however, teaches separate contracts included in a bundle. –see pars. 268-273. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to include the teachings of Slyke to the disclosure of Shepherd in order to reduce the risk associated with dealing with future events.

Re Claim 10: Shepherd/Slyke/ Muralidhar disclose the claimed method supra including separate contracts within a bundle as in claim 1 above, but do not explicitly disclose determining whether a future event for which at least one contract bundle is desired for the issuance of at least one futures contracts bundle thereon. However, the fact that the system issues a futures contract related to a predetermined phenomenon implies that the contract is suitable (Shepherd, Column 4, lines 30-33). The entry of information by the ordering stakeholder such as the range of future outcomes, time of maturity and entitlement due at maturity (Shepherd, Column 4, lines 47-55) shows that

the system requires information specific to a futures contract and will not execute the transaction unless said information is provided.

Re Claim 11: Shepherd/Slyke/ Muralidhar disclose the claimed method supra but do not explicitly disclose the step of establishing over said trading system, a plurality of futures contract bundles, each contract bundle comprising at least two separate futures contracts, at least one of said plurality of futures contract bundles having a time period from a sale thereof to an expiration thereof which partially overlaps the time period from a sale of another of said plurality of futures contract bundles until an expiration of said another of said plurality of futures contract bundles, said at least one of said plurality of futures contract bundles corresponding to a first periodic occurrence of said future event and said another of said plurality of futures contract bundles corresponding to a second periodic occurrence of said future event. However it was well known in futures markets at the time of invention that similar contracts involving the same future event but having a different expiratory date could be traded concurrently. For example, different futures contracts involving an interest rate can be traded concurrently with different expiratory dates (i.e. 3 months, 6 months, one year). In this way a person looking to hedge against rising or falling interest rates, specific to a future date can trade according to the time period for which they are interested. It would have been obvious to anyone skilled in the ordinary art at the time of invention to include this feature to the disclosure of Shepherd ,Slyke and Muralidhar because it was a common practice in futures markets and would have provided users with more hedging opportunities.

Re Claim 12: Shepherd/Slyke/ Muralidhar disclose the claimed method supra but

do not explicitly disclose the step wherein each one of said plurality of futures contract bundles are sold at staggered time periods having a predetermined relationship to the timing of a specific periodic occurrence of said future event associated therewith.

Following the example from previously rejected claim 11, it was well known in the art at the time of invention that participants in futures markets have traded in interest rate futures to hedge against rising or falling interest rates. Furthermore it was well known in the art that interest rate futures contracts often deal with quarterly projections, which are staggered time periods having a predetermined relationship to the timing of a specific occurrence of a future event (the actual reporting of the change in the interest rate). It would have been obvious to anyone skilled in the ordinary art at the time of invention to include this feature to the disclosure of Shepherd, Slyke and Muralidhar because it was a common practice in futures markets and would have provided users with more hedging opportunities.

Re Claim 13: Shepherd/Slyke/ Muralidhar disclose the claimed method supra but do not explicitly disclose the step of establishing, over said trading system, a contract bundle associated with a specific periodic occurrence of said future event at substantially the same time as an expiration of a futures contract bundle associated with another periodic occurrence of said future event. However it was well known in futures markets that certain contracts regarding the same future events, but with different expiratory dates are sold at different time periods, specifically one is sold at substantially the same time as the expiration of the other, because the resulting outcome of the first contract affects the range of possible outcomes for the second

contract. For instance, in projecting the change in earnings of a particular company from one quarter to the next, market participants would need to know the outcome of the previous quarter before any sort of range outcomes can be set for the contract associated with the second bundle. It would be obvious to anyone skilled in the ordinary art at the time of invention to include this feature to the disclosures of Shepherd and Slyke, because it was a common practice in futures markets.

Re Claim 14: Shepherd/Slyke/Muralidhar disclose the claimed method supra and Shepherd further discloses the steps wherein selling and settling are accomplished in a credit-risk free manner (Column 5, lines 56-60).

Re Claim 15: Shepherd/Slyke/Muralidhar disclose the claimed method supra but does not explicitly disclose the steps of selling is on margin and the step of selling and the step of settling said are accomplished in a credit risk manner. However it was well known in the art to sell any financial instrument, including futures contracts, on margin. This allows participants to hedge their positions by purchasing expensive contracts even if they do not have the resources to buy them individually. Once the contracts are settled the borrowed portion is paid, but the hedged position is maintained. This being said, there is always a credit risk involved in such a transaction as the borrower could possibly default on the loaned portion. It would have been obvious to anyone skilled in the ordinary art at the time of invention to include this feature to the disclosure of Shepherd and Slyke because it was a common practice in futures markets and provides customers, via borrowing, with broader hedging opportunities.

Re Claims 16, 17: Shepherd does disclose that counterparty stakeholders input

registering data (Column 4, lines 25-29), which would include the identity of the counterparty. Muralidhar discloses the trader providing an account number and a password to the system and the steps of selling, resale, settling and assessing over trading system is with respect to traders having indicia. Cols. 7-8. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to include in the method and apparatus of trading risk management contracts of Shepherd and the method and system of trading of liquid insurance contracts of Slyke the ability to accept identification indicia as taught by Muralidhar since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

Re Claim 18, 19: Shepherd discloses the claimed method supra but does not explicitly disclose wherein only a predetermined group of traders may access trading system wherein the group is selected from predefined or pre-qualified traders. Slyke however, teaches a buyer/underwriter qualification process-see pars. 126-128. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Shepherd to specifically include the prequalification of traders as taught by Slyke in order to protect the customers and the exchange from fraudulent transactions. Furthermore, this step would have been obvious to anyone skilled in the ordinary art since often times futures contracts are relevant only to a certain sector and therefore the contracts are only extended to these parties. In this way outside parties

without an interest in the particular commodity cannot affect the price of the contract.

Re Claim 20: Shepherd/Slyke/Muralidhar disclose the claimed method supra including separate contracts within a bundle as in claim 1, but do not explicitly disclose the step of introducing new futures contracts to the trading system as a split of an existing separate contract, an aggregate liquidation value of the new contracts equaling the liquidation value of the existing separate contract which is split. However, this step was notoriously well known to anyone skilled in the ordinary art and therefore would have been obvious to include. If it becomes apparent, before the expiratory date, that one outcome of a futures contract is fairly certain, then this particular outcome can be further split, thus allowing participants to further refine their hedged position. The total value of the contract must remain the same, but participants are given the opportunity to better their current position

Re Claim 21: Shepherd/Slyke/Muralidhar discloses the claimed method supra including separate contracts within a bundle as in claim 1 and while not explicitly disclosing the step of concurrent with said step of introducing new futures contracts to the trading system as a split of an existing separate contract, retiring said existing separate contract, this step is consistent with, and therefore obvious to anyone skilled in the ordinary art, the process of splitting a futures contract. Since it has been determined that one outcome in the original contract is almost guaranteed to occur, this option is split into further options to encourage further trading and allow participants to further hedge their positions. At the same time the old contract is retired since the other

outcomes are essentially worthless and trading on these positions should be halted.

Re Claim 22: Shepherd/Slyke/Muralidhar disclose the claimed method supra including separate contracts within a bundle as in claim 1, but does not explicitly disclose the step of receiving at least two existing separate contracts prior to a maturity thereof and introducing a new futures contract to the trading system as a combination of said existing futures contract, a liquidation value of the new futures contract equaling an aggregate of the liquidation value of said at least two existing separate contract.

However the process of combining two existing futures contracts into an aggregated singular contract was well known in futures markets and would therefore be obvious to anyone skilled in the ordinary art to include in an electronic market such as the one of Shepherd. In this way the electronic version can mimic the existing market as much as possible and provide participants with all the advantages of the traditional markets. The value would also have to be the aggregated value since the price of a Contract cannot be destroyed and must remain constant until the payout date.

Re Claim 23: Shepherd/Slyke/Muralidhar disclose the claimed method supra including separate contracts within a bundle as in claim 1, but does not explicitly disclose the step of soliciting, over said trading system a trader for delivery of said at least one new contract, which completes contract bundle, prior to a maturity thereof. However this step would have been obvious to anyone skilled in the ordinary art at the time of invention so that these outstanding separate contracts can be bought and grouped together. In this manner the number of outstanding contracts involving just one of the merged contracts can be limited, and more of the new contract bundles can be

issued.

Re Claim 24: Shepherd/Slyke/Muralidhar discloses the claimed method supra including separate contracts within a bundle as in claim 1 and Shepherd further discloses the step of accepting said futures contracts for settlement thereof includes accepting contract bundles for settlement at an expiration thereof (Column 5, lines 12-24).

Re Claim 25: Shepherd/Slyke/Muralidhar disclose the claimed method supra including separate contracts within a bundle as in claim 1 and Shepherd discloses redemption prior to an expiration thereof. (Column 5, lines 47-55).

Re Claim 26: Shepherd/Slyke/Muralidhar disclose the claimed method supra and Shepherd further discloses the step of providing a market authority for mediating any dispute related to said trading system (Column 5, lines 56-60).

Re Claim 27: Shepherd/Slyke/Muralidhar disclose the claimed method supra but do not explicitly disclose establishing a computer network based contract trading system electronically accessible by non-trading observers. However this step would have been obvious to anyone skilled in the ordinary art since many trading platforms for financial instruments allow for non- trading observers. For instance observers, not just traders have access to stock tickers and the like that display market information and furthermore, web based markets allow any registered user to access and view trading systems regardless of their desire to trade.

Re claim 28: Further a system would have been necessary to perform the method of previously rejected claims 1,17-19 in combination and is therefore rejected using the same art and rationale.

Claims 104, 105 have similar limitations found in claims 1 and 28 above, and therefore are rejected by the same art and rationale.

Claims 113, 124 have similar limitations found in claim 1 above, and therefore are rejected by the same art and rationale.

Claims 114, 115 have similar limitations found in claims 1 and 7 in combination above, and therefore are rejected by the same art and rationale.

3. Claim 96 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shepherd, Slyke, and Muralidhar as applied to claim 28 above, and further in view of Togher (U.S. Patent No. 5,375,055).

Re claim 96: Shepherd/Slyke/ Muralidhar disclose the claimed method supra but do not explicitly disclose anonymous trading. Togher however, disclose anonymous trading-see Abstract. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Shepherd, Slyke, and Muralidhar to specifically include anonymous trading as taught by Togher in order to avoid an unwanted shift in the market due to the buying practices of large institutional investors.

Response to Arguments

4. Applicant's arguments filed 4/10/2009 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

In response to the applicant's arguments that the references, Shepherd, Slyke, and Muralidhar do not teach or suggest establishing a contract bundle paying off an aggregate fixed sum at maturity, Shepherd disclose methods and apparatus enabling the management or risk relating to specified, yet unknown, future events by enabling entities (parties) to reduce their exposure to specified risks by constructing compensatory claim contract orders on yet-to be identified counter-parties, being contingent on the occurrence of the specified events(col. 3 L 29-39) and 'money' payoffs at maturity of a matched contract. (col. 5 L 14-18). Slyke disclose liquid (i.e., risk management) contracts including bundling of multiple existing contracts (para.[0268-0269]). Muralidhar disclose derivatives paying off an aggregate fixed sum at maturity, the fixed sum known when contract bundles are established. (Providing a pre-specified payoff of a fixed sum at maturity.- col. 2 L 64 to col. 3 L 14; col. 4 L31-34, col. 6 L45-53).

In addition to Slyke disclosing creating derivatives from multiple existing liquid insurance contracts, Muralidhar disclose the creation, marketing, trading an valuation of derivative financial instruments based on various attendance right options. Col. 4 L 31-34. As is old and well known in the art of financial trading, derivatives are bundles of option and future/forward contracts.

Therefore, the combination of Shepherd, Slyke and Muralidhar teach the limitations in the claim.

Furthermore, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art to include in the risk management trading systems of Sheperd and Slyke the ability to provide a pre-specified payoff of a fixed sum at maturity as taught by Muralidhar since the claimed invention is merely a combination of old elements, and in the combination each element merely would have performed the same function as it did separately, and one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that the results of the combination were predictable.

Conclusion

5. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

(1) Chung, Ronald, Fung, Hung-Gay. (1995, September). Steering clear of derivatives risk. *TMA Journal*, 15(5), 10. (In general, derivatives are bundles of option and future/forward contracts).-see p.2 Valuating Derivates.

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the

shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Elda Milef whose telephone number is (571)272-8124. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday -Friday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kambiz Abdi can be reached on (571)272-6702. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Kambiz Abdi/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3692

Elda Milef
Examiner
Art Unit 3692